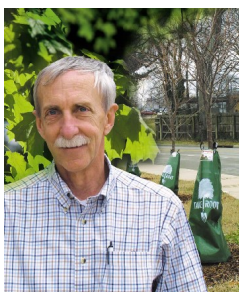


2016 State of the Trees Report

Department of Public Works
Division of Urban Forestry

2016 – A Forester’s Perspective

The year 2016 was off the charts. We had one of the hottest summers on record with over 100 days during which the high temperature was greater than 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Normal is 46 days. At this time we also struggled with a severe drought which, at one time in November, was nearly twenty-two inches below the yearly norm. 2016 still ended as being one of the driest on record. But there were good things that helped to balance the not so good. The Tree Commission hosted the If Trees



Gene Hyde is editor of this publication.

Could Sing launch party on Earth Day with quite a large group of people attending. And speaking of the Tree Commission, they were judged by the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council to be the best tree commission in the state for the past year.

So great is the reputation of this tree commission that the Memphis Tree Board made a special visit to Chattanooga to study the functioning of our tree commission, programs, and urban forestry operations. The Tree Commission also launched the Notable Tree Register and is seeking new applications. New finds were made as the Emerald Ash Borer continues its relentless spread outwards. It now can be found on both sides of the Tennessee River and from the Chickamauga Dam to Warner Park. I decided to be more “hands on” at permit pre-submittal meetings conducted by the Land Development Office when potential permit applicants seek to discover requirements from a wide variety of issuing authorities. Encouraging the building industry to adhere to the provisions of the Tree Ordinance while providing technical assistance regarding proper tree selection, planting and care will provide rich benefits for Chattanooga.



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Arbor Day at Murray Hills Park

County Commissioner Warren Mackey made a request that if we would plant trees in this neighborhood city park he would help with the purchase. Coordination was needed with the TVA since several high voltage transmission lines overhung the park on two sides. TVA enforces strict standards regarding tree planting and the policy was strictly enforced. In the end it was decided that four species of small growing trees would be allowed under the lines: Yoshino Cherry, Sweetbay Magnolia, Winter King Hawthorne, and Forest Pansy Redbud. On Arbor Day Friday, March 4th, the Murray Hills Neighborhood Association,

elected officials, city and state officials, along with an Honor Guard from Central High School planted the first tree.

At that time Chattanooga was recognized for achieving Tree City status for the 26th consecutive year.



The next day 29 more trees were planted by a neighborhood group from Murray Hills along with the Volkswagen Volunteers. All agree the park is now more attractive and inviting.

Special Points of interest in 2016:

- Chattanooga was a ‘Tree City’ for the 26th year.
- Arbor Day was held at Murray Hills Park.
- The backlog of Service Requests awaiting inspection is zero!

Tree Planting in 2016

A total of 130 trees representing 23 species and varieties were planted by in-house and contract crews in 2016 as street trees. They are:

1. Overcup Oak	25 ea.
2. Yoshino Cherry	19 ea.
3. Redbud	17 ea.
4. 'Jefferson' American Elm	14 ea.
5. Trident Maple	10 ea.
6. 'Princeton Sentry' Ginkgo	10 ea.
7. 'Happidaze' Sweetgum	6 ea.
8. Tulip Poplar	5 ea.
9. Other Miscellaneous Oaks	5 ea.
10. Yellowwood	3 ea.
11. Various Lindens	2 ea.
12. Serviceberry	2 ea.

13. 'Village Green' Zelkova	2 ea.
14. Goldenrain Tree	2 ea.
15. Okame Cherry	2 ea.
16. Honey Locust	2 ea.
18. Sugar Maple, 'Bosque' Elm, Chinese Pistache, Ornamental Pear	1 each
TOTAL	130

The total cost of the planting was \$14,959 including shipping at \$1,640. Most of these were replacements for trees that had died or been run over. A total of 30 new trees were planted in Murray Hills Park as part of the Arbor Day celebration. An effort is being made to re-introduce American Elm trees back into the landscape as they are excellent street trees tolerant of heat, drought, urban soils, and air pollution. Many of these trees were killed decades ago by the Dutch Elm Disease but the replacements are a variety that has been found to be resistant to this destructive fungal disease.

Pre-submittal Meetings

During the Mayor Jon Kinsey's term from 1997 to 2001 it was his priority to establish the "One Stop Shop" in a new building called the Development Resource Center (DRC). Built specifically to aid the development community by making it quicker and easier to obtain all of the necessary permits in one location, the DRC serves as a hub for building inspectors, engineers, the Regional Planning Agency, and transportation planners. An outgrowth of this process was the establishment of the Pre-submittal meeting. Held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings these meetings enable developers, engineers, and architects the opportunity to sit around the table with representatives from all of the departments responsible for issuing permits. Such a meeting is extremely useful since it saves time and provide an applicant with all of the information needed to successfully prepare and submit permit requests with minimal hassle and delays. As a result of increased development in the downtown, Northshore, and other areas where there are an abundance of street trees it was

obvious to City Forester Gene Hyde that someone needed to take an active role in the plans review process to ensure that new tree plantings on city-owned lands are appropriate for the site and are provided a one year replacement warranty. A second goal is to see that existing City trees are factored into the development plans for special protection and care. By City Code the City Forester has the authority to issue tree ordinance permits which requires specific details on standards to follow for tree plantings and removals, and tree protection for existing trees. According to Hyde, "My attendance at the pre-submittal meetings will provide better oversight into the process for all of those in the building community who work around City-owned trees." Mr. Hyde has issued over 30 Tree Ordinance permits in 2016 which is far and away more than ever in a single year. "Although I have only been attending these meetings regularly since November I can already see a difference" said Hyde.



Status of Service Requests

Responding to service requests is the single most time consuming and expensive aspect of our urban forestry operations. These requests pour in from a variety of sources including the 311 center, Fire and Police Departments, the Hamilton County Education Department, sister divisions within City Wide Services, and other City departments. In 2002 Chattanooga implemented the CSR system for tracking service requests. In mid-December we switched to a new system called Accela. Therefore the figures shown below will be the last data obtained from CSR. In 2016 the 311 Call center records indicate that we received 931 requests as shown below and that

all of them have been inspected and closed. The three most recent years of information are provided as a basis for comparison.

	2016	2015	2014	2013
General Tree Problems	76	70	71	77
Fallen Trees and Branches	416	321	476	420
Tree Removal/Hazard	161	162	204	200
Tree Trimming	268	251	315	303
Totals	931	804	1,066	1,000

The Notable Trees Register

The English poet William Blake once noted, "The tree which moves some to tears of joy is, in the eye of others, only a green thing which stands in the way." Knowing that there are trees in Chattanooga worthy of attention the Tree Commission launched the Notable Tree Register as a way to recognize unique trees. A secondary goal was to involve residents of Chattanooga in the process and to be on the lookout for special trees, be they on public or private property. One of the first tasks was to define a Notable Tree. Obviously these trees are important because of some unusual attribute or a connection with history. Or they could be an average tree that is just special to the nominator. The Tree Commission believes that it is important to involve the public because there are numerous examples of individuals who have stepped forward and spoken in favor of a particular tree. For example, in 2000 Rod Covey was stunned to find out that leaders of his condominium association in North Canton, Ohio wanted to remove an old cucumber magnolia tree from the corner of the property because several branches broke off in a storm. They claimed that because these branches were "mushy" the tree was dangerous. To prove his point that the tree was not a hazard Mr. Covey brought one of the fallen branches to a meeting of the condominium owners association and pounded on the podium. No mush came out of the branch and the association voted to rescind the removal order. It was later discov-

ered that the tree is the largest of its species in the world and was then listed in the *National Register of Big Trees*.

Although not every tree on the register will be a champion tree the Tree Commission recognized that Notable trees on the register extends a link across generations. According to the Tree City USA Bulletin No. 64, saving these special trees, "helps develop values for things beyond the material, values almost of a spiritual nature." It also reminds us, as expressed by Arbor Day Founder J. Sterling Morton, that each generation takes the



Chestnut Oak on Missionary Ridge

earth as trustees. Passing along a community's special trees is part of that responsibility as temporary stewards."

After much discussion the Tree Commission final decided that a Notable Tree must be commonly recognized as an established and familiar feature of the community, confirmed as a significant part of the community's heritage, or planted to commemorate special events or community leaders.

Application information can be found on the City of Chattanooga's urban forestry web page.

Blue Trees

In the spring of 2015 City Forester Gene Hyde was approached by The Nature Conservancy to host an initiative known as "Blue Trees". Hyde pitched the Tree Commission on the project which was quickly approved. After discussions with various agencies and donors it was decided that Public Art Chattanooga would take the lead and the project would be an art initiative with an environmental message. Funding was secured, plans



*Kon Dimopoulos along Riverfront Parkway
October 21, 2016*

were made, and in October, 2016 Chattanooga welcomed world-renowned artist Konstantin Dimopoulos to the city. Known simply as Kon, the native Australian has done the project in more than 20 cities across the United States, Canada, England, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. His strategy is to apply a mixture of vibrant blue chalk and water to the trunks of trees

with the expectations that his activity will draw attention. Then he can deliver a message that hopefully will "raise awareness of our city's natural assets, educate people about the importance of trees, and demonstrate the role art plays in highlighting environmental, social and political issues."

Although many residents voiced concerns about the permanence and possible harm to the trees, Dimopoulos uses a water-based colorant which is biologically safe and will "change through the cycle of nature" over the course of a year.

Opportunities for the public to grab a brush or a roller were held on the downtown waterfront, Sculpture Fields, the Bessie Smith Hall, and Calvin Donaldson Elementary School. Children and adults alike helped color small saplings blue during each event. A total of these 78 small red-bud trees in seven-gallon containers will later be planted in Highland Park, East Lake and the Ridgedale neighborhoods.



*Coloring trees at the Sculpture
Fields. October 22, 2016*

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The Urban Forestry program functions as a separate operation within City Wide Services. Its mission is to provide the City with a safe and attractive urban forest, and to educate citizens about the benefits and proper care of trees. It is guided by the nine-member Tree Advisory Commission as appointed by the Mayor. The Forestry Division draws on other elements within both Public Works and Parks and Recreation to assist with tree planting, solving service requests, and other missions. The program's main operating budget for FY '15-'16 of \$851,232 is derived strictly from annual appropriations.

This report is prepared annually at the request of the Tree Advisory Commission.

Forestry and Emergency Staff

In 2008 the Urban Forestry operations were expanded to include the Emergency Department. And in 2014 the Central Business District Crew as created.

Listed below are the current employees in their assigned sections:

Urban Forestry:

Tree Trimmers: Wayne Pinkerton and two vacancies

Equipment Operator 4: Bruce Johnson, Dexter Joshen, and David Tate

Crew Supervisor 2: Mike Richie and Milton Stewart and one vacancy

Forestry Supervisor: Jerry Mauldin

Emergency:

The Emergency Department has the responsibility for the removal of chemical spills along roadways as well as dead animal pick-ups, litter pick-up, and discarded tires. They also are on call at night for fallen trees, pothole repair, and other mishaps that present a hazard to travelers along City streets. There is always a round-the-clock Emergency Department worker on duty every day of the year!

Workers include:

Equipment Operator 1: Alvin Thomas and Warren Tillison
Equipment Operator 3: Frozen
Equipment Operator 4: Sherman Sales, David Lanford, Rich Jeckel, Tommy Harris, Carl Ramsey, Ross Petty, and one vacancy

The Central Business District

This crew works third shift and is responsible for the cleanup of leaves, litter and making the downtown area clean and attractive.

Workers include:

Crew Worker 1: Four vacancies.
Equipment Operator 3: Van Johnson
Crew Supervisor 2: Terry McCullough

